

2020 -- S 2539

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LC005033
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

A N A C T

RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES - ANIMAL FUR PRODUCTS

Introduced By: Senators Euer, and Valverde

Date Introduced: February 25, 2020

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 11 of the General Laws entitled "CRIMINAL OFFENSES" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 70

4 FUR PRODUCTS ACT

5 **11-70-1. Findings.**

6 (a) The general assembly finds that animals that are slaughtered for their fur endure
7 tremendous suffering. Animals raised on fur farms typically spend their entire lives in cramped and
8 filthy cages. Fur farmers typically use the cheapest killing methods available, including suffocation,
9 electrocution, gas, and poison.

10 (b) Considering the wide array of alternatives for fashion and apparel, the general assembly
11 finds that the demand for fur products does not justify the unnecessary killing and cruel treatment
12 of animals.

13 (c) The general assembly believes that eliminating the sale of fur products in the state of
14 Rhode Island will promote community awareness of animal welfare and in turn will foster a more
15 humane environment in Rhode Island.

16 **11-70-2. Definitions.**

17 As used in this chapter:

18 (1) "Fur" means any animal skin or part thereof with hair, fleece, or fur fibers attached
19 thereto, either in its raw or processed state.

1 (2)(i) "Fur product" means any article of clothing or covering for any part of the body, or
2 any fashion accessory, including, but not limited to, handbags, shoes, slippers, hats, earmuffs,
3 scarves, shawls, gloves, jewelry, keychains, toys or trinkets, and home accessories and décor, that
4 is made in whole or part of fur.

5 (ii) "Fur product" does not include any of the following:

6 (A) A dog or cat fur product, as defined in section 1308 of title 19 of the United States
7 Code;

8 (B) An animal skin or part thereof that is to be converted into leather, or which in
9 processing will have the hair, fleece, or fur fiber completely removed;

10 (C) Cowhide with the hair attached thereto;

11 (D) Lambskin or sheepskin with the fleece attached thereto; or

12 (E) The pelt or skin of any animal that is preserved through taxidermy or for the purpose
13 of taxidermy.

14 (3) "Nonprofit organization" means any corporation that is organized under 26 U.S.C.
15 section 501(c)(3) that is created for charitable, religious, philanthropic, educational, or similar
16 purposes.

17 (4) "Taxidermy" means the practice of preparing and preserving the skin of an animal that
18 is deceased and stuffing and mounting it in lifelike form.

19 (5) "Ultimate consumer" means a person who buys for their own use, or for the use of
20 another, but not for resale or trade.

21 (6) "Used fur product" means fur in any form that has been worn or used by an ultimate
22 consumer.

23 **11-70-3. Prohibition.**

24 It is unlawful to sell, offer for sale, display for sale, trade, or otherwise distribute for
25 monetary or nonmonetary consideration a fur product in the state of Rhode Island.

26 **11-70-4. Exceptions.**

27 The prohibitions set forth in § 11-70-3 do not apply to the sale, offer for sale, displaying
28 for sale, trade, or distribution of:

29 (1) A used fur product by a private party (excluding a retail transaction), nonprofit
30 organization or second-hand store, including a pawn shop;

31 (2) A fur product required for use in the practice of a religion; or

32 (3) A fur product where the activity is expressly authorized by federal or state law.

33 **11-70-5. Penalty.**

34 A person convicted of a violation of this chapter shall be fined no less than five hundred

1 dollars (\$500) nor more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per fur product or imprisoned not
2 exceeding one year, or both.

3 **11-70-6. Severability.**

4 If any provision of this chapter or its application to any person or circumstance is held
5 invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this chapter which can be
6 given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this
7 chapter are severable.

8 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect six (6) months after passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES - ANIMAL FUR PRODUCTS

- 1 This act would prohibit the sale of fur products in the state of Rhode Island.
- 2 This act would take effect six (6) months after passage.

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